passing the standing orders committee, are understood to have expended a similar sum; and probably double the amount has been wasted in the struggle of three powerful companies for a London and York line. At first sight it seems incredible that such large sums could be fairly or honestly applied, but the principal items of these accounts, we believe, would admit, if examined, of a legal, if not of a satisfactory explanation. It is required, for example, by the legislature, that every person interested in property to be purchased for a line shall receive notice in due form of the intention of the company, by *personal* service, for which the usual professional charge is 1*l.* A letter delivered through the post, with a penny stamp, would answer the same purpose, but would be a non-compliance with standing orders. On a long trunk line there may be 20,000 owners of property to receive notices; and, consequently, 20,000*l.* to be paid to a solicitor for this duty alone, if the funds of the company will admit, and in the absence of any stipulation on the part of the directors that the work should be done at contract price."

"It does not seem to be understood, that to compel the public to commit an unnecessary outlay is practically the same thing as the misappropriation of a corresponding amount raised by taxation. If an ordnance survey of England, for the purposes of railway extension, would have prevented the loss of three or five millions, fruitlessly spent by five hundred defunct railway companies in the surveys of last year, the neglect which occasioned this loss is surely as grave a fault as the squandering by Government of three or five millions of revenue in works of no public utility."

New powers are being created by railways:—

"The world has seen many changes; but, in all ages, those who have contrived to concentrate its resources to the greatest extent have been the rulers of mankind. The powers of the Shepherd Kings grew out of the possession of large flocks and herds, and exclusive rights of pasture: the power of the feudal aristocracy out of the laws of primogeniture. Free-trade legislation has destroyed the power conferred by monopolies of food; but a monopoly of the means of locomotion may prove a more formidable influence than any power which has yet been tolerated in the hands of the few. We doubt not the Chancellor of the Exchequer will be left in possession of Downing-street; but what if in Capel-court a *railway cabinet* should one day meet to discuss the affairs of the nation! Imagine a Trades' Union, represented by the chairman of half-a-dozen great amalgamated companies, directing a gross revenue larger (as the railway revenue will be in a few years) than that which now pays the interest of the national debt and defrays the whole public expenditure of the United Kingdom;—a Trades' Union, omnipotent as a monied corporation, in the Bank parlour; controlling the funds, and dictating the terms of Government loans by operations in the buying and selling of Exchequer bills, or 3 per cent. stock, on a more extensive scale than the Rothschilds; a board dispensing a larger patronage than that of a French minister; with an army of paid agents to collect or diffuse information at every accessible point between the Land's End and the Orkneys, and the electric telegraph to transmit it!"

The writer takes a new view of the formation of *termini*:—

"What is it railway projectors mean, when they talk of a terminus? If by a terminus they contemplate a place where a railway train must stop and turn back, and where every passenger who has farther to go must get out and walk, it is clear that the only suitable place in all England for a terminus is the Land's End. At the Land's End all travellers would agree in opinion that they had arrived at a termination of their journey; but in all other places, where one traveller wishes to stop, another is equally desirous of going on. The termini of twenty passengers by a train from Euston-square, may be at twenty different towns. On the Brighton line, the object of one tourist may be to see Reigate, that of another to go from Brighton to Worthing or Hastings; and so with visitors to the metropolis; no one terminus, however central, would meet the convenience of all. Those who have friends in Pimlico do not wish, on arriving at Shoreditch, to have a second journey to begin. Farringdon-street would suit them better, as more central, yet the majority of those who might stop there would only do so because compelled; and some bound for the continent would wish to stop nowhere in London, but to pass right through, with as little delay as possible, on their way from Manchester to Dover.

It is obvious that the word *terminus* is inappropriate to any railway object. Common roads have no termini. Every road or lane leads on to some other road or lane, the whole forming an infinite series of links. The old Bath-road, for instance, does not *terminate* at the White Horse Cellar. A country gentleman travelling post may, if he please, put up there, or he may drive on to the Spread Eagle, Gracechurch-street; or, without getting out of his carriage, he may take fresh horses and continue his journey through Essex to Colchester.

Continuity of railway communication is the want to be supplied. Besides continuity, the public require, not termini, but stations only; which, however, may be of various kinds:—small stations and large stations; stations for passengers; stations for goods; dock stations; river-side stations; stations for making up long trains; stations for engines and repairs; stations at considerable distances apart; and omnibus stations, at intervals of every five hundred yards in densely-populated districts."

The construction of two main *through* lines is advocated, one running east and west, the other north and south. We hope shortly to see some grand and comprehensive plan proposed and determined on.

BUILDINGS IN AVIGNON.

The following is the substance of the paper read at the last meeting of the Freemasons of the Church, and already referred to:—

Arriving at Avignon on the 13th of February last, I experienced a peculiar degree of exhilaration from the charms of the surrounding scenery, and especially from the indescribable brilliance of the atmosphere. But aware of the important standing which this city held in the middle ages, I was even more interested in the buildings and other memorials of antiquity which remain there.

My course commenced by making a circuit of the well-preserved Italian gothic walls, the whole extent of which, together with the occasional gates, present one and the same characteristic feature; they are, however, no longer available for purposes of defence.

My next act was to wander within the streets, merely to receive the general impressions which such a survey would produce; and this to the utter rejection of the local guides who tender their officious services to strangers; intending afterwards to examine the special objects of interest.

The streets are very narrow, but passably clean, and the houses, of brilliant white stone, strong as fortresses, have some of them vines against them, even in the back streets, with stems of prodigious thickness. Images of the Madonna abound more than in any other part of France: many niches, however, are empty; and it is said, that formerly nearly every house was adorned in the same manner. These are in general pieces of graceful sculpture, but accompanied, *of course*, by bits of tinsel-paper, tawdry ribbons, and faded flowers. In several of the very narrowest streets may be seen large mansions, indicating former wealth, enriched by bosses, brackets, and sculptured garlands, in the style of the period of Louis XV.

The Hotel de Ville has been recently burned down, which I was told had in it carved armorial bearings of the consuls who ruled Avignon during its continuance as a republican city; but I saw the lofty bell-tower standing, with two wooden figures near its top, to strike the hours. Many Spanish names are found among the inhabitants; and the circumstance of the popular speech being the Provençal, or langue d'Oc, which the troubadours used, adds another peculiarity to this strange old city.

Avignon is richer than any other city of the south of France in ecclesiastical edifices, some of the best of which are, since the revolution, changed to other purposes, or encumbered by excrescences. One convent is now a barrack; another is an hotel, and has gilt mouldings hidden under heaps of cattle fodder. Several are become stores for teasles for carding. Some churches are disused; but though not demolished, are left to the effects of time. Of one which I inquired about, I was informed that it is opened twice a year for the public examinations of the primary schools; and the Papal palace is now the principal barrack.

Some of the churches, however, still subsist as the boast of the city. St. Peter's has a façade of richest gothic, done in the 16th century, for 1800 golden crowns, with sculptures in the purest taste; and St. Didier's church has an ancient picture of the crucifixion in one of its chapels, where the costumes are all of king René's time. The windows of St. Martial's church are regarded as good specimens of the best gothic.

This city was of old so exclusively an ecclesiastical colony, that it was calculated that one-third of its population was at all times employed in devotional exercises; and there was, consequently, so much of bell-ringing, that Rabelais called it the *ville sonnante*. It contained thirty-five convents for both sexes, ten hospitals, sixty churches, and a university; and it possessed a commandership in the Order of Malta.

There is a tale current of an Englishman having at some time discovered in the Church of the Cordeliers, the antique tomb of Petrarch's Laura, beneath an accumulation of thorns and nettles. The pieces being carefully numbered, he had them conveyed to England; but to relieve his conscience, he left a sum of money for erecting a new one to her memory: it is certain that a modern and meagre monument is there at the present day.

A solitary relic remains of imperial Roman building, consisting of a square tower of gigantic masonry, with an archway extending half way up from the ground, but long ago closed, and now obstructed by the most offensive objects, notwithstanding the constant resort of the people to a pump beside it.

But one edifice above all others in Avignon commands the general attention; indeed, when viewed from across the river, it appears to crush the city by its breadth and loftiness, besides the advantage of being built on the highest ground—a rock in the centre of Avignon. This is the Papal Palace, where nine popes reigned in succession between A.D. 1309 and 1376; the first being Clement V., and the latest Gregory XI., followed by the later series of papal legates. In this building, during the fourteenth century, Rienzi, the Roman tribune, was incarcerated until released at the intercession of his friend Petrarch; and John XXII burned alive several partisans of his rival Nicolas V., besides a bishop of Cahors, on a charge of witchcraft and poisoning; and in the next century a whole assembly at a banquet were treacherously blown up with gunpowder. In this edifice, too, was held the office of the Holy Inquisition, which, it will be remembered, had its original institution in the south of France. After contributing to the horrors of 1791, when eighty victims were massacred in the tower of the inquisition, the palace is now a barrack, occupied by 1,600 troops.

Entering the great porch beneath a gallery from which the papal benedictions were formerly given, and looking up to the clock tower, whose bell used to announce the election of each new pope, my admiration was greatly excited by the very simple design of the towers and courts, the huge masonry, the cement harder than the very rock, and corridors cut in the substance of the walls.

But the various apartments have been so mutilated to suit the exigencies of present utility, that the great hall has been divided by two floorings into three stories for military rooms; besides a chapel and an armoury, which are treated in the same manner. Thus, not only are the light and wide-spanned windows cut across, but the fine old frescos in their embrasures, portions of which are still uncovered by whitewash, belong partly to one story and partly to another.

The inquisition chapel had a large fresco of the "Day of Judgment," by Giotto, the borders and pendants of which are still visible around the whitewash. Another chapel had a representation of the Redeemer on his throne, surrounded by prophets and apostles, each holding a scroll with a verse of scripture. And other frescos or scriptural subjects, by Giottino

For Info on PDF Compression and OCR visit our website